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Der Suezkanal. Seine Geschichte, seine Bau- und Verkehrs-Verhältnisse und seine militärische Bedeutung. Von Albert Ungard, Edler von Öthalom. viii and 104 pp. and 6 maps in colours. A. Hartleben, Vienna, 1905. (Price, M. 4.)

The author remarks in his preface that, hitherto, no German handbook has been prepared treating exhaustively of the various conditions that brought the Suez Canal into existence. This book affords a systematic and thorough treatment of the whole great enterprise, beginning with the history of the old canal that was actually in operation many centuries before the Christian era. The political and financial preliminaries to the building of the present canal, the geology and topography of the Isthmus of Suez, the canal construction and the development of the ports, the Sweet Water Canal, the transit conditions, the economic and military significance of the work, and the international and maritime questions involved are all fully described and discussed. The maps are excellent, and will rank among the best for general use. The book is a scientific as well as a popular description of all phases of the Suez Canal.

Les Chemins de Fer coloniaux en Afrique. Par E. de Renty.

Première Partie : Chemins de Fer des Colonies Allemandes, Italiennes et Portugaises. viii and 154 pp. and 8 sketch maps. F. R. de Rudeval, Paris, 1903. (Price, fr. 1.50.)

Deuxième Partie: Chemins de Fer dans les Colonies Anglaises et au Congo Belge. 337 pp. and 9 sketch maps. 1904. (Price, fr. 3.50.)

Troisième Partie: Chemins de Fer dans les Colonies Françaises. (To appear.)

The main ideas upon which these volumes are based are (1) that Africa is rich in a great variety of resources that, if properly developed, will enrich the colonial Powers which divide the continent among them; and (2) that the railroad is certain to be the most powerful agent in this development. The author, Captain de Renty, of the French army, also emphasizes the idea that the benefits to be derived by the colonial Powers from the development of their possessions will consist as much in the creation of new needs among the populous native tribes, thereby opening new markets for European manufactures, as in the exploitation of the natural resources of the colonies.

These ideas are well founded, according to the testimony of the leading authorities on Africa; and upon them as the groundwork of his studies the author has given, in the first two volumes of his series, a careful and able treatment of the economic conditions in those parts of Africa under consideration, as well as the history of the remarkable railroad enterprises now in progress.

Captain de Renty treats in turn the colonies of each of the Powers, beginning with the German possession of Togo. Does the climate of Togo, for example, adapt it for European colonization, or must it remain a colony of commerce and plantations? Is the seaboard favourable for the development of ports? Are the rivers adapted for commerce; what are the present trade routes; can horses and cattle thrive, or is man the only means of transport? About what is the density of population; what are the commercial resources, and the amount of the import and export trade; what is being done for general development, either by Governmental or private enterprise? Upon such broad foundations as these the author gives the history of the railroad enterprises, in progress or projected, in each of the colonies, with comments or criticisms of his own and many citations of the views and policies of Governments and of the opinions of leading men.

At the end of most of the colony chapters the author gives the conclusions he has reached from the facts collated and a list of the works he has consulted. He thinks that the very tardy development of railroads in German East Africa is a mistake, inasmuch as the superior enterprise of the Congo State in the west and of the British colonies in the north and southwest are already providing outlets for the products of the German colony; that Italy is wisely planning to complete the mastery of her small possessions by means of the railroad and locomotive; that Portugal has not yet proved her ability to give to her rich territories the intensive and rapid development required by the necessities of modern economic life; and that the broad and energetic railroad policy of the Congo State bids fair to hasten the organization, in an admirable manner, of all its material interests, and make the territory of vast importance to Belgium. The author has only words of praise for the far-sighted railroad policy of the British and the rapidity with which they are carrying it into effect.

Captain de Renty is the first writer to treat this great phase of African development with fulness and adequate grasp. His book fills a need in African literature, and the concluding volume will be awaited with interest.

Tales from Old Fiji. By **Lorimer Fison.** xlv and 175 pp., 22 Illustrations, Appendix, and Index. Alexander Moring, Ltd., The De La More Press, London, 1904. (Price, 7s. 6d.)

This collection of Fijian legends, most of them narrated to the author by Taliai-tupou, the King of Lakemba in the eastern group of the Fijis, is interesting reading, and worthy of record as a contribution to our knowledge of a vanishing people. It includes twelve stories, an introduction in which the writer throws light upon the characteristics of the Fijians by an examination of many words in their language, and an appendix descriptive of some of their customs and arts. He selects a considerable number from the large class of old Fijian words that are innocent in themselves but contain an evil secondary meaning, and thus adduces strong evidence that the old Fijian heathen, in spite of his pleasing exterior of which explorers wrote, was as debased and brutal a savage as can be imagined. "Thotho," for example, means the dried grass that is strewn on house-floors, but its other meaning is the women who were strangled and then buried in a chief's grave. Such words show that the introduction of Christianity had a humanizing influence, and led to the abolition of abhorrent practices.

Doubts have been expressed as to the authenticity of statements concerning Fijian cannibalism, but the author says that many words more than substantiate the most revolting accounts that have been published; and some of the words seem to bear out the theory that cannibalism in the islands arose from the strongest motive, and that is hunger. Many legends are good stories as well as valuable for ethnological material. If the schoolmaster had not reached Tonga, no doubt its legend (here included) as to the origin of Napoleon would have become veracious history handed down from the fathers. According to this story Napoleon was the son of a Tonga mother, with whom he was living in Merikei (America), when the men of Faranise (France) came seeking him to save them from their enemy Uelingtoni (Wellington):

I could tell you of his mighty deeds—how he smote the enemies of Faranise, though they were many and strong; how he chased Uelingtoni from land to land, till he caught him at Uatalu, and banished him to a desert island, where he died.